

NOTICE OF FUNDING AVAILABILITY

VA-ASG-2017-01

FEDERAL AWARDING AGENCY NAME: Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)

FEDERAL OPPORTUNITY TITLE: Adaptive Sports Programs for Disabled Veterans
and Disabled Members of the Armed Forces

Office of Public and Intergovernmental Affairs 38 CFR Part 77

Funding Availability under the Grants for Adaptive Sports Programs for Disabled
Veterans and Disabled Members of the Armed Forces

ANNOUNCEMENT TYPE: Initial

FUNDING OPPORTUNITY NUMBER: VA-ASG-2017-01

CFDA NUMBER: 64.034

KEY DATES: Applications for the Adaptive Sports Grant (ASG) Program must be submitted in Grants.Gov to be transmitted to the Office of National Veterans Sports Programs and Special Events (NVSP&SE) Program Office by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on April 28, 2016. Awards made for adaptive sports activities grants will fund operations over a 13-month period beginning September 1, 2016 and ending September 30, 2017.

VA is announcing the availability of funds for adaptive sports grants. This NOFA contains information concerning the ASG Program, adaptive sports grant application processes, and the amount of funding available.

SUBMISSION OF APPLICATION PACKAGE: The primary application for funding opportunity VA-ASG-2017-01 is available through Grants.Gov

(<http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/home.html>) and listed as VA-Adaptive Sports Programs. Additional mandatory forms, described in IV.B., to be attached to the application package are located at the VA Adaptive Sports Grant Web site:

http://www.va.gov/adaptivesports/va_grant_program.asp. Applications may not be sent by mail, email or facsimile. Applications must be received in Grants.Gov by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on the application deadline date. All application materials must be in a format compatible with Grants.Gov.

Applications must arrive as a complete package. Materials arriving separately will not be included and may result in the application being rejected. Applicants may submit an amendment to a grant application as described under 38 CFR § 77.6. For procedures to submit an amendment to a previously submitted grant application, contact the NVSP&SE Program Office.

In order for an applicant to submit a grant application in Grants.Gov, the applicant must have current registration with Duns & Bradstreet for a D-U-N-S Number (<http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform/>), the System for Award Management for a SAM or CAGE Code (<https://www.sam.gov/index.html/home#1>), and Grants.Gov with a current E-Business Point of Contact in order to submit an application.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Michael F. Welch, Office of National Veterans Sports Programs and Special Events (002C), Suite 912D, Department of

Veterans Affairs, 810 Vermont Avenue, N.W., Washington, DC 20420; (202) 632-7136 (this is NOT a toll-free number); Michael.Welch5@va.gov or vacoadaptiveSP@va.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Program Description

A. Purpose: To provide grants to eligible adaptive sports entities to plan, develop, manage, and implement adaptive sports activities for disabled Veterans and disabled members of the Armed Forces. Adaptive sports activities means:

- (1) instruction, participation, and competition in adaptive sports;
- (2) training and technical assistance to program administrators, coaches, recreation therapists, instructors, VA employees, and other appropriate individuals; and
- (3) coordination, Paralympic classification of athletes, athlete assessment, sport-specific training techniques, program development (including programs at the local level), sports equipment, supplies, program evaluation, and other activities related to the implementation and operation of the program.

B. Funding Priorities: The overriding goal for this NOFA is to ensure that appropriate levels of resources are provided to eligible entities with the greatest capabilities to provide adaptive sports activities that meet the current needs and priorities for disabled Veterans and disabled members of the Armed Forces as described in the ASG Program goals and objectives, and provides adaptive sports activities in geographic regions where VA has identified limited sports opportunities for disabled Veterans and disabled members of the Armed Forces as further described in V.A.2.(g) below.

C. *Definitions:* Contained in section 77.2 of Title 38, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR).

D. *Approach:* Grantees will be expected to leverage grant funds to provide adaptive sports activities for disabled Veterans and disabled members of the Armed Forces. In doing so, grantees are required to establish outreach programs including active liaison with VA, Department of Defense, State, local and tribal governments; and Veterans Services Organizations (VSOs), and others as detailed in § 77.11. Grantees may work through coordinated partnerships built either through formal agreements or the informal working relationships commonly found amongst adaptive sports entities. All applicants must provide signed letters of support from any partners which will deliver services that reflect the applicant's engagement in providing adaptive sports activities as specified in § 77.5(a)(5). Letters of partnership support should include details of the scope of activities and if applicable, scope of funding involved in the partnership. Letters of recommendation from individuals and entities not involved in delivery of adaptive sports services outlined in the application do not qualify as letters of support from partners.

A fundamental goal of the ASG Program is to provide assistance in developing ongoing rehabilitative, therapeutic, and wholelife health adaptive sports opportunities for disabled Veterans and disabled members of the Armed Forces. For planning purposes, the ASG Program is not intended to provide long-term funding for adaptive sport programs. The ASG program is administered annually and does not guarantee subsequent awards.

E. *Authority:* Funding under this NOFA is authorized by 38 U.S.C. 521A, as amended by the Department of Veterans Affairs Expiring Authorities Act of 2015, Public Law 114-58. VA implements the ASG Program by regulation in 38 CFR Part 77. Funds made available under this NOFA are subject to the requirements of the aforementioned regulations and other applicable laws and regulations.

F. *Requirements for the Use of Adaptive Sports Programs Grant Funds:* The grantee's request for funding must be consistent with the limitations and uses of adaptive sports program grant funds set forth in 38 CFR Part 77 and this NOFA. The following requirements apply to grants awarded under this NOFA:

(1) Grantees may use up to a maximum of 5 percent of ASG grant funds for administrative costs, as specified in § 77.14(c)(ii). The 5 percent rate is mandated by Public Law 113-59, Sec. 5(c) and that statute applies definitions of administrative costs unique to the VA Adaptive Sports Grant that supersedes other federal non-legislative guidance.

(2) Grantees may support or provide services (including adaptive sports activities) to individuals with disabilities who are not Veterans or members of the Armed Forces, or both, but grantees will not use grant funds to support or provide services (including adaptive sports activities) to those individuals, as specified in § 77.14(d).

(3) Grantees may not use grant funds to support or provide services from individuals barred from receiving VA benefits, as specified in § 77.14(e).

II. Federal Award Information

A. *Overview:* This NOFA announces funds for initial and renewal grants to provide adaptive sports activities.

B. *Funding:* VA will provide up to \$8 million in funding over a 13-month period for initial grants to eligible entities proposing adaptive sports activities as described in I.A. above. There are renewable grant opportunities under this NOFA.

C. *Allocation of Funds:* VA will provide up to \$8 million in funding to be awarded under this NOFA to grantees for a 13-month period with the following requirements:

- (1) The maximum award amount for an ASG grant under this NOFA is \$500,000.
- (2) There is not an established maximum number of ASG grant applications per eligible adaptive sports entity per year.

D. *Grant Award Period:* All grants will be for a 13-month period.

III. Eligibility Information

A. *Eligible Applicants:* In order to be eligible, an applicant must qualify as a Non-Federal Government entity with significant experience in managing a large-scale adaptive sports program for persons with disabilities if those disabilities are those that disabled Veterans and disabled members of the Armed Forces have. To demonstrate significant experience, all key personnel identified in the grant application must have experience implementing the adaptive sports activities to be provided, and have experience working with persons with disabilities like those of the disabled Veterans and disabled members of the Armed Forces who will be served through the adaptive sports grant. The experience must be for two continuous years immediately prior to the date of submission of the grant application. When more than one entity would be engaged in

the provision of the adaptive sports activities, the entity applying for the adaptive sports grant must provide signed documentation that verifies that through the partnership, it has the experience necessary to implement all of the proposed activities.

B. *Cost Sharing or Matching*: This section is not applicable.

C. *Other*: An applicant must comply with 2 CFR 200 criteria for a Non-Federal entity eligible for federal grant programs. For example, an entity found to be in violation of a particular Federal statute that would preclude receipt of federal grants is ineligible and will not be considered for grant funding. Because the ASG Program provides adaptive sports activities for disabled Veterans and disabled members of the Armed Forces, applicants that do not provide adaptive sports activities for disabled Veterans and disabled members of the Armed Forces will not be considered for grant funding.

IV. Application and Submission Information

A. *Obtaining an Application Package*: Download directly from the Grants.Gov Web site at <http://www.grants.gov/>. Any questions regarding this process should be referred to the NVSP&SE Program Office via phone at (202) 632-7136 (not a toll-free number) or via e-mail at Michael.Welch5@va.gov or vacoadaptiveSP@va.gov. For detailed ASG Program information and requirements, see 38 CFR Part 77 and visit the NVSP&SE Web site at: http://www.va.gov/adaptivesports/va_grant_program.asp.

B. *Content and Form of Application*: The application format under Grants.Gov Opportunity Number VA-ASG-2017-01 contains electronic versions of the standard forms that are required, including SF-424, SF-424A and SF-424B. VA Form 10096 “*Adaptive Sport Grant Application*” and the VA “*Administrative and Financial Review*”

Questionnaire for Grantees” form are required attachments but are not available on Grants.Gov; these forms can be downloaded at the NVSP&SE Web site: http://www.va.gov/adaptivesports/va_grant_program.asp. A SF-1199A, VA Form 10091, and Payment Management System Access Form can also be downloaded at the NVSP&SE Web site and are required attachments for applicants that do not have a current FY2015 VA Adaptive Sports Grant. Additional attachments may be provided. If the adaptive sports activities will be implemented through partnerships as described in §§ 77.5(a)(5) and 77.8(b), signed documentation confirming a partnership must be submitted in Grants.Gov. If not, the proposal will be evaluated as if the partnership has not been officially established.

C. Submission Dates and Times: Applications must be submitted through Grants.Gov by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on April 28, 2016. Awards will fund operations for the 13-month period beginning September 1, 2016 and ending September 30, 2017. Applications must be submitted as a complete package. Materials arriving separately will not be included in the application package for consideration and may result in the application being rejected. Additionally, in the interest of fairness to all competing applicants, this deadline is firm as to date and hour, and VA will treat as ineligible any application that is received after the deadline. Applicants should take this practice into account and make early submission of their materials to avoid any risk of loss of eligibility brought about by unanticipated delays, computer service outages, or other delivery-related problems. If an application package has been submitted, applicants may submit an amendment to the grant application package as described under 38 CFR § 77.6.

D. *Intergovernmental Review*: This section is not applicable.

E. *Funding Restrictions*: Up to \$8 million will be awarded under this NOFA for a 13-month period. Eligible entities are not restricted in the number of grants they may receive. The following requirements apply to grants awarded under this NOFA:

- (1) A grant may not exceed the annual appropriated funding for the ASG Program.
- (2) There is not an established maximum number of grants per entity per year.
- (3) The maximum award amount for an ASG grant under this NOFA is \$500,000.
- (4) An eligible entity that receives a grant may use a portion of the grant for administration and personnel expenses of the eligible entity within authorized levels as described in I.F.(1)

F. *Other Submission Requirements*:

- (1) Applicants may apply for an initial grant or a renewal grant.

(a) *Initial Grant*. An eligible entity may apply for funding as an initial grant if they have not received prior funding from the VA ASG program for their adaptive sport program or if they have received prior grant funding but their proposal for VA-ASG-2017-01 differs substantially from their previously funded program.

(b) *Renewal Grant*. After receiving an initial grant, grantees may apply for a renewal grant if the grantee's program will remain substantially the same.

- (2) Submission of an incorrect or incomplete application package will result in the application being rejected during threshold review. The application packages must contain all required forms and certifications. Selections will be made based on criteria

described in 38 CFR Part 77 and this NOFA. Applicants and grantees will be notified of any additional information needed to confirm or clarify information provided in the application and the deadline by which to submit such information. The application package must be submitted through Grants.Gov to be transmitted to the NVSP&SE office. Applications may not be sent by mail, email or facsimile (FAX).

V. Application Review Information

A. Criteria:

1. VA will only score applicants that meet the following threshold requirements:

- (a) The application is filed within the time period established in this NOFA;
- (b) The application is completed in all parts;
- (c) The applicant is an eligible entity;
- (d) The activities for which the adaptive sports program grant is requested are eligible for funding under 38 CFR Part 77;
- (e) The applicant's proposed participants are eligible to receive adaptive sports activities under 38 CFR Part 77;
- (f) The applicant agrees to comply with the requirements under 38 CFR Part 77;
- (g) The applicant does not have an outstanding obligation to the Federal Government that is in arrears and does not have an overdue or unsatisfactory response to an audit; and
- (h) The applicant is not in default by failing to meet the requirements for any previous Federal assistance.

2. VA will use the following criteria to score applicants who are applying for both initial and renewal adaptive sports program grants:

(a) VA will award up to 5 points based on the clarity of the applicant's adaptive sports activities plan,

(b) VA will award up to 10 points based on the applicant's program concept and objectives,

(c) VA will award up to 20 points based on the program design based on facts, good reasoning, sound judgment, and logic, and program elements directly linked to the achievement of program objectives,

(d) VA will award up to 20 points based on adequacy of program management structure to include background, qualifications, experience, and past performance (with particular focus on adaptive sports activities), of the applicant, and any partner or partners identified by the applicant in the adaptive sports grant application,

(e) VA will award up to 5 points based on the applicant's capability, including support provided by any partnership(s), to successfully support the program,

(f) VA will award up to 10 points based on the applicant's financial capability and whether budgeted costs are reasonable, allowable and produce good value for the amount of funds paid for the activities proposed to be undertaken,

(g) VA will award up to 15 points based on the applicant's proposal to provide adaptive sports opportunities in geographic regions where VA has identified limited sports opportunities for disabled Veterans and disabled members of the Armed Forces. The NVSP&SE Web Site has tools to identify geographic regions with limited sports

opportunities including the Paralympic Sport Club Finder and VA Active Calendar, both accessible via: <http://www.va.gov/adaptivesports/>,

(h) VA will award up to 15 points based on the applicant's proposal to provide an adaptive sports activity or activities that meet VA's current needs and priorities for disabled Veterans and disabled members of the Armed Forces. Grant applications will be evaluated on how well they explain how the proposed adaptive sports activities meet VA's policy described in VI.B., and VA's goals and objectives as described in VIII.A., and

(i) VA will award up to 1 point for inclusion of all required information as specified by 38 U.S.C. 521A(c).

Detailed information regarding applications can be found in 38 CFR §§ 77.4-77.13.

B. Review and Selection Process: VA will review all initial adaptive sports program grant applications according to the following steps:

1. VA will score all applicants that submit all components necessary to have a complete grant application as described in 38 CFR Part 77.
2. Rank applications that score at least 60 cumulative points and receive at least one point under each of the categories identified in § 77.5(a). The applications will be ranked in order from highest to lowest scores.
3. Utilize the ranked scores of applications as the primary basis for selection while also considering the total amount of grant funds allocated for a specific sport, region, or type of activity.

VI. Federal Award Administration Information

A. *Award Notices:* Although subject to change, the NVSP&SE Program Office expects to announce grant recipients by July 30, 2016. Prior to executing a funding agreement, VA will contact the applicants and make known the amount of proposed funding and verify the applicant would like the funding offered. Once VA verifies that the applicant is still seeking funding, VA will enter into an agreement with the grantee and make payments to the grant recipient in accordance with 38 CFR Part 77, VA Office of Finance policy (<http://www.va.gov/finance/policy/pubs/volumeX.asp>), and other applicable provisions.

B. *Administrative and National Policy Requirements:*

It is VA's policy to support adaptive sports outreach programs that facilitate providing adaptive sports opportunities in recreational, rehabilitative, therapeutic and wholelife health adaptive sports activities at the introductory through elite levels of participation for disabled Veterans and disabled members of the Armed Forces. VA's adaptive sports outreach networks involve interagency and Non-Federal adaptive sports entities at the national, regional and community-based levels and incorporate a variety of outreach tools including web-based products.

Grantees are expected to offer outreach programs as described in 38 CFR § 77.11. In addition, grantees are expected to interact with VA's outreach programs to facilitate effectiveness of the grant and the comprehensive approach of providing adaptive sports opportunities at the national, regional and community-based levels.

C. *Reporting:* VA places great emphasis on the responsibility and accountability of grantees. As described in 38 CFR §§ 77.16 and 77.18, VA has procedures in place to monitor adaptive sports activities provided to participants and outcomes associated

with the adaptive sports activities provided under the ASG Program. Applicants should be aware of the following:

1. Upon execution of an agreement with VA, grantees will comply with requests from the NVSP&SE Program Office for provision of oversight and monitoring of activities subject to 38 CFR § 77.18.

2. Grantees will be required to report data such as information on the participants served, financial and acquisition data related to the grant, and types of supportive services provided by grantees. Grantees must manage the data for activities funded by the ASG Program separate from that of activities funded by other programs. Grantees will be required to report grantee-level data for activities funded by the ASG Program to VA on at least a quarterly basis.

3. VA shall complete annual monitoring evaluations of each grantee. Monitoring will include the submission of quarterly and annual financial and performance reports by the grantee. Monitoring may also include VA conducting visits to verify compliance with requirements of the grant through on-site review of the grantee operations, activities and data. The grantee will be expected to demonstrate adherence to the proposed program concept, as described in the grantee's application.

4. Grantees will be assessed based on their ability to provide the deliverables outlined in their grant application. In addition to meeting program requirements defined by the regulations and NOFA, grantees will be assessed on their ability to facilitate participants' opportunities for ongoing participation in adaptive sports activities to enhance therapeutic effects and wholelife health.

VII. Federal Awarding Agency Contact

A. FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Michael F. Welch, Office of National Veterans Sports Programs and Special Events (002C), Suite 912D, Department of Veterans Affairs, 810 Vermont Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20420; (202) 632-7136 (this is NOT a toll-free number); Michael.Welch5@va.gov or vacoadaptiveSP@va.gov.

All correspondence with the VA concerning this NOFA should reference the above title and funding opportunity number listed at the top of this solicitation. Please read the complete announcement before sending inquiries or submitting proposals. Once the NOFA deadline has passed, the VA staff may not discuss this competition with applicants until the proposal review process has been completed.

VIII. Other Information

A. *VA's Goals and Objectives for Funds Awarded Under this NOFA:* In accordance with 38 CFR § 77.5(a)(7) and (8), VA will evaluate an applicant's ability to meet VA's goals and objectives for the ASG Program, which include the provision of adaptive sports activities designed to enhance the rehabilitative, therapeutic, and wholelife health of disabled Veterans and disabled members of the Armed Forces across geographic regions. For purposes of this NOFA, VA's goals and objectives also include the provision of adaptive sports activities across the spectrum of adaptive sports from recreational through elite levels of participation.

B. *Payments of Adaptive Sports Program Grant Funds:* Grantees will receive payments electronically through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Payment Management System. Payment methods must minimize the time elapsing between the transfer of funds from the United States Treasury and the disbursement by the ASG Program grant recipient.